

strictions specified in section 612 of this title as to hereafter located unpatented mining claims. The execution and acknowledgment of such a waiver and relinquishment by such owner or owners and the recordation thereof in the office where the notice or certificate of location of such mining claim is of record shall render such mining claim thereafter and prior to issuance of patent subject to the limitations and restrictions in section 612 of this title in all respects as if said mining claim had been located after July 23, 1955, but no such waiver or relinquishment shall be deemed in any manner to constitute any concession as to the date of priority of rights under said mining claim or as to the validity thereof.

(July 23, 1955, ch. 375, § 6, 69 Stat. 372.)

§ 615. Limitation of existing rights

Nothing in this subchapter and sections 601 and 603 of this title shall be construed in any manner to limit or restrict or to authorize the limitation or restriction of any existing rights of any claimant under any valid mining claim heretofore located, except as such rights may be limited or restricted as a result of a proceeding pursuant to section 613 of this title, or as a result of a waiver and relinquishment pursuant to section 614 of this title; and nothing in this subchapter and sections 601 and 603 of this title shall be construed in any manner to authorize inclusion in any patent hereafter issued under the mining laws of the United States for any mining claim heretofore or hereafter located, of any reservation, limitation, or restriction not otherwise authorized by law, or to limit or repeal any existing authority to include any reservation, limitation, or restriction in any such patent, or to limit or restrict any use of the lands covered by any patented or unpatented mining claim by the United States, its lessees, permittees, and licensees which is otherwise authorized by law.

(July 23, 1955, ch. 375, § 7, 69 Stat. 372.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The mining laws of the United States, referred to in text, are classified generally to this title.

CHAPTER 16—MINERAL DEVELOPMENT OF LANDS WITHDRAWN FOR POWER DEVELOPMENT

Sec.	
621.	Entry to lands reserved for power development.
622.	Liability for damage, destruction, or loss of claim.
623.	Recording and reporting of unpatented claims; time.
624.	Protection of existing valid claims.
625.	Prohibition of unspecified use.

§ 621. Entry to lands reserved for power development

(a) Conditions of entry

All public lands belonging to the United States heretofore, now or hereafter withdrawn or reserved for power development or power sites shall be open to entry for location and patent of mining claims and for mining, develop-

ment, beneficiation, removal, and utilization of the mineral resources of such lands under applicable Federal statutes: *Provided*, That all power rights to such lands shall be retained by the United States: *Provided further*, That locations made under this chapter within the reverted Oregon and California Railroad and reconveyed Coos Bay Wagon grant lands shall also be subject to the provisions of the Act of April 8, 1948, Public Law 477 (Eightieth Congress, second session): *And provided further*, That nothing contained herein shall be construed to open for the purposes described in this section any lands (1) which are included in any project operating or being constructed under a license or permit issued under the Federal Power Act [16 U.S.C. 791a et seq.] or other Act of Congress, or (2) which are under examination and survey by a prospective licensee of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, if such prospective licensee holds an uncanceled preliminary permit issued under the Federal Power Act authorizing him to conduct such examination and survey with respect to such lands and such permit has not been renewed in the case of such prospective licensee more than once.

(b) Placer claims; notice; hearing; order; rules and regulations

The locator of a placer claim under this chapter, however, shall conduct no mining operations for a period of sixty days after the filing of a notice of location pursuant to section 623 of this title. If the Secretary of the Interior, within sixty days from the filing of the notice of location, notifies the locator by registered mail or certified mail of the Secretary's intention to hold a public hearing to determine whether placer mining operations would substantially interfere with other uses of the land included within the placer claim, mining operations on that claim shall be further suspended until the Secretary has held the hearing and has issued an appropriate order. The order issued by the Secretary of the Interior shall provide for one of the following: (1) a complete prohibition of placer mining; (2) a permission to engage in placer mining upon the condition that the locator shall, following placer operations, restore the surface of the claim to the condition in which it was immediately prior to those operations; or (3) a general permission to engage in placer mining. No order by the Secretary with respect to such operations shall be valid unless a certified copy is filed in the same State or county office in which the locator's notice of location has been filed in compliance with the United States mining laws.

The Secretary shall establish such rules and regulations as he deems desirable concerning bonds and deposits with respect to the restoration of lands to their condition prior to placer mining operations. Moneys received from any bond or deposit shall be used for the restoration of the surface of the claim involved, and any money received in excess of the amount needed for the restoration of the surface of that claim shall be refunded.

(c) Validity of withdrawals unaffected

Nothing in this chapter shall affect the validity of withdrawals or reservations for purposes other than power development.

(Aug. 11, 1955, ch. 797, §2, 69 Stat. 682; Pub. L. 86-507, §1(27), June 11, 1960, 74 Stat. 202; Pub. L. 95-91, title IV, §402(a)(1)(A), title VII, §§703, 707, Aug. 4, 1977, 91 Stat. 584, 606, 607.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

Act of April 8, 1948, referred to in subsec. (a), is act Apr. 8, 1948, ch. 179, 62 Stat. 162, which is not classified to the Code.

The Federal Power Act, referred to in subsec. (a), is act June 10, 1920, ch. 285, 41 Stat. 1063, as amended, which is classified generally to chapter 12 (§791a et seq.) of Title 16, Conservation. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see section 791a of Title 16 and Tables.

AMENDMENTS

1960—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 86-507 inserted “or certified mail” after “registered mail”.

SHORT TITLE

Section 1 of act Aug. 11, 1955, provided: “That this Act [enacting this chapter] may be cited as the ‘Mining Claims Rights Restoration Act of 1955’.”

TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS

“Federal Energy Regulatory Commission” substituted for “Federal Power Commission” in subsec. (a) pursuant to sections 402(a)(1)(A), 703, and 707 of Pub. L. 95-91, which are classified to sections 7172(a)(1)(A), 7293, and 7297 of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare, and which terminated Federal Power Commission and transferred its functions relating to licensing and permits for dams, reservoirs, or other works for development and improvement of navigation and for development and utilization of power across, along, from, or in navigable waters under part I of Federal Power Act (16 U.S.C. 791a et seq.) to Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

§ 622. Liability for damage, destruction, or loss of claim

Prospecting and exploration for and the development and utilization of mineral resources authorized in this chapter shall be entered into or continued at the financial risk of the individual party or parties undertaking such work: *Provided*, That the United States, its permittees and licensees shall not be responsible or held liable or incur any liability for the damage, destruction, or loss of any mining claim, mill site, facility installed or erected, income, or other property or investments resulting from the actual use of such lands or portions thereof for power development at any time where such power development is made by or under the authority of the United States, except where such damage, destruction, or loss results from the negligence of the United States, its permittees and licensees.

(Aug. 11, 1955, ch. 797, §3, 69 Stat. 682.)

§ 623. Recording and reporting of unpatented claims; time

The owner of any unpatented mining claim located on land described in section 621 of this title shall file for record in the United States district land office of the land district in which the claim is situated (1) within one year after August 11, 1955, as to any or all locations heretofore made, or within sixty days of location as to locations hereafter made, a copy of the notice of location of the claim; (2) within sixty days

after the expiration of any annual assessment year, a statement as to the assessment work done or improvements made during the previous assessment year.

(Aug. 11, 1955, ch. 797, §4, 69 Stat. 683.)

§ 624. Protection of existing valid claims

Nothing in this chapter contained shall be construed to limit or restrict the rights of the owner or owners of any valid mining claim located prior to the date of withdrawal or reservation: *Provided*, That nothing in this chapter shall be construed to limit or restrict the rights of the owner or owners of any mining claim who are diligently working to make a discovery of valuable minerals at the time any future withdrawal or reservation for power development is made.

(Aug. 11, 1955, ch. 797, §5, 69 Stat. 683.)

§ 625. Prohibition of unspecified use

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this chapter, all mining claims and mill sites or mineral rights located under the terms of this chapter or otherwise contained on the public lands as described in section 621 of this title shall be used only for the purposes specified in section 621 of this title and no facility or activity shall be erected or conducted thereon for other purposes.

(Aug. 11, 1955, ch. 797, §6, 69 Stat. 683.)

CHAPTER 17—EXPLORATION PROGRAM FOR DISCOVERY OF MINERALS

Sec.

- 641. Establishment and maintenance of program for exploration; financial assistance.
- 642. Exploration contracts.
- 643. “Exploration” defined.
- 644. Advice and assistance by Government departments and agencies; expenditure of funds.
- 645. Repealed.
- 646. Authorization of appropriations.

§ 641. Establishment and maintenance of program for exploration; financial assistance

The Secretary of the Interior is hereby authorized and directed, in order to provide for discovery of additional domestic mineral reserves, to establish and maintain a program for exploration by private industry within the United States, its Territories and possessions for such minerals, excluding organic fuels, as he shall from time to time designate, and to provide Federal financial assistance on a participating basis for that purpose.

(Pub. L. 85-701, §1, Aug. 21, 1958, 72 Stat. 700.)

CONGRESSIONAL DECLARATION OF POLICY

The recital clause of Pub. L. 85-701, which preceded section 1, provided: “That it is declared to be the policy of the Congress to stimulate exploration for minerals within the United States, its Territories and possessions.”

§ 642. Exploration contracts

(a) Terms and conditions; interest rates

In order to carry out the purposes of this chapter, and subject to the provisions of this section, the Secretary is authorized to enter into explo-